Reviewer’s report

Title: Kaposi’s sarcoma associated herpesvirus infection among female sex workers and general women in Shanghai, China: a cross-sectional study

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Reviewer: Anne Buve

Reviewer’s report:

The paper presents data on the prevalence of HHV-8 infection as assessed by serology, in female sex workers and women from the general population in Shanghai, China. The paper is nicely written and my comments are mainly about lack of details in the methods section and the presentation of the results.

MAJOR REVISIONS

1. Page 6, paragraph on sampling. I am not sure what is meant by “Participants from these sites were recruited until expected samples were finally met”. Does this mean that the research team visited households till the required sample size was reached? That procedure seems to contradict random sampling of households.

2. Page 8, last paragraph on KSHV serology. Can you please provide some data on the sensitivity and the specificity of this serological test?

3. Page 9, statistical analysis. How were the variables for the multivariate analysis selected? On the basis of the p value in the univariate analysis?

4. Page 11, last paragraph, last sentence. This suggests that the databases of the female sex workers and the women in the general population were merged and that a multivariate analysis was done on it. If that is the case that should be explained in the methods section.

5. Table 2 and Table 3. Please also show the univariate analyses.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

Discussion section. Could the authors comment on the difference between HSV-2 and KSHV serology regarding trend with age. Many studies, including this one, have documented an increase in HSV-2 prevalence with age. This is explained by the fact that HSV-2 infection is a lifelong infection and that acquisition goes on throughout life. There is no such trend for KSHV. What do the authors make of this? Is KSHV serology also lifelong? If that is the case could one say that a KSHV prevalence that does not increase with age is suggestive of vertical transmission of KSHV?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'